

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 003239

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [KPAO](#) [IS](#) [RS](#) [EG](#)

SUBJECT: TERRORISM STRIKES CAIRO AGAIN; MUBARAK'S  
'HISTORIC' TV INTERVIEW: EGYPTIAN MEDIA THEMES, APRIL 25  
TO MAY 3

11. (U) Summary: TV and print media devoted extensive coverage to the April 30 terrorist attacks in Cairo, quoting GOE officials' statements and noting that several eyewitnesses had given conflicting versions of how the attacks unfolded. Statements of condemnation from leading Egyptian figures were printed and aired, while several publications offered readers a "what really happened" version of the attacks. President Mubarak's much-publicized six-hour interview on Egyptian TV April 24-26 yielded no surprise announcements. Russian president Vladimir Putin's visit to Egypt was widely covered and praised by commentators, with one opining that Putin had "energized the region." A leading Egyptian actress won the Best Actress award at the 11th National Film Festival in Cairo for her role in the controversial film "I Love Cinema." End summary.

12. (U) Terrorism strikes Cairo: Two terrorist attacks against tourists in Cairo on April 30 dominated media coverage during Egypt's long holiday weekend. All media outlets reported that Ehab Yousry Yassin, a suspect in the April 7 Al Azhar bombing attack, had jumped from a bridge and detonated a bomb near a group of tourists gathered outside the Egyptian Museum. Pan Arab Al Arabiya satellite channel was the first TV news outlet to offer coverage, followed by Egypt's Nile News. (Note: Nile News was the only Egyptian TV channel that covered the attack. The others continued normal programming. End note.) At one point during its live coverage, Nile News conducted a phone interview with Deputy Chief for State Security, General Fouad Allam, who stated that two victims were Israelis, "probably attacked as the result of frustration over Israeli practices."

13. (U) Terrorism strikes Cairo (continued) - coverage the day after: Photos in all major newspapers the following day, May 1, showed Yassin's bloodied body on the street with his head and left arm destroyed. The media also reported that, after Yassin had conducted his attack, his fiancée and sister opened fire on a bus of Israeli tourists near Cairo's Citadel. No one was injured during the firing, but the two attackers reportedly died at their own hands. All newspapers highlighted various disparities among eyewitnesses' accounts of the attacks, and printed condemnations of the attackers by leading Egyptian figures, including the Sheikh of Al-Azhar and the Grand Mufti. The Muslim Brotherhood also issued a statement of condemnation, claiming that such acts of terrorism in Egypt "serve the American-Zionist plot."

14. (U) Terrorism strikes Cairo (continued) the real scoop?: In an exclusive interview with pro-government Al Gomhouriya (circulation: 200,000), Interior Minister Habib Al Adly claimed that the April 30 attacks were "random operations" perpetrated by individuals who were "not part of a terrorist group or organization." Pro-government Al Ahram (circulation: 750,000) published an article on May 2 based on information from a "high level security source" claiming that Yassin's younger brother, reportedly still at large, was believed to be in possession of an explosive device. London-based Al Sharq Al Awsat's Cairo bureau filed a report claiming that "well-informed sources" had stated that Yassin, in fact, dropped his bomb on the group of tourists at the Egyptian Museum and escaped. The article's source claimed that the dead body on the scene was that of a tour guide.

15. (U) Mubarak's interview: President Mubarak's "historic" three-day TV interview with leading media figure (and former presidential spokesman) Emadadeen Adeeb, April 24-26, failed to yield any of the surprise announcements anticipated by the public. Most notable among statements the Egyptian President did make was that he claimed to be undecided as to whether or not he would run for a fifth term later this year. Most pro-government and independent media commentators had positive things to say about the interview, although some criticism did appear in print, including some by Mustafa Bakry, editor-in-chief of the sensationalist weekly Al Osboa' (circulation: 50,000), who called the interview "a disappointment." A commentator in Al Ahram praised Mubarak's decision to wait, "unlike some opposition candidates," before announcing his candidacy. Unofficially, one pro-government journalist with whom a PA

officer spoke complained: "The interview was boring, even embarrassing. After all these years, my colleagues and I all expected something big. What we got was six more hours of talk."

16. (U) Putin comes to town: Russian flags adorned the capital and downtown traffic was frequently brought to a stand-still during Russian president Vladimir Putin's visit to Cairo, April 26 - 28. Commentary in both print and on TV spoke positively of the visit, with some praising Putin's "candor" and "ability to see the Arabs' predicament clearly." A commentator in Al Ahram argued on April 30 that Putin's visit "... because of his call for an international peace conference, energized the region."

17. (U) Best 'Christian wife' 2005: Egyptian actress Leila Elwi won the Best Actress award at Egypt's 11th National Film Festival, which ended on April 27, for her role in the controversial film "I Love the Cinema". Elwi played the role of a Christian wife repeatedly abused by her husband. Egyptian news websites "albawaba.com" and "yallabina.com" noted that several lawsuits have been filed against the film. The latest is by a prominent Coptic lawyer demanding that the film be banned as "it touches on Christian issues not approved by the church." The lawsuit also demands an official apology be made by the filmmakers to the Coptic Church.

GRAY